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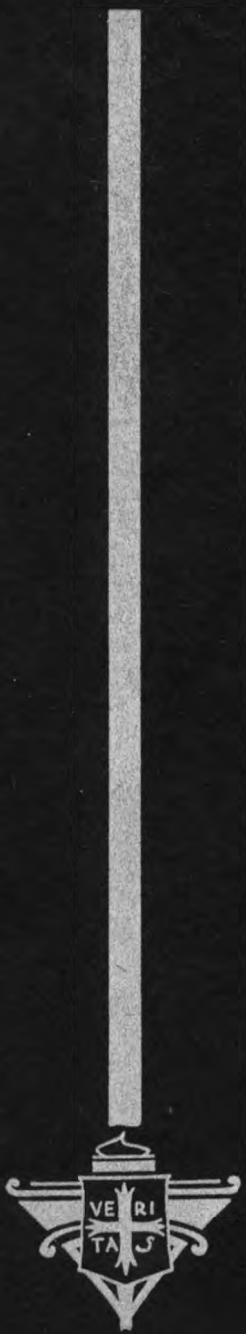

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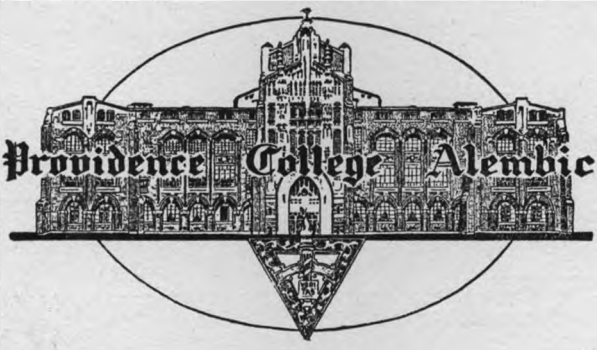

PUBLISHED QUARTERLY

BY THE

STUDENTS OF PROVIDENCE COLLEGE

PROVIDENCE, R. I.

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Editorial

THROUGH what we read today there runs a sorry thread, hard to detect, yet glaring, once seen. The faint tragedy, the dominance of violence, and the swift pursuit of pleasure have one common bond—to fly from reality. This is in spite of the fact that what is called "realism" is supposed to be the goal of modern fiction. The truth is that what is called realism is not at all comparable to reality.

To picture life as it is demands more than action, plot, or setting. It demands something utterly lacking in much of modern literature—the penetration of human nature and the plumbing of the things that beset man. To cast over characters a fog of psychological balderdash and have this pass for motivation amounts to literary sleight of hand. To justify each action by reference to a frame work of circumstances only lightly sketched and hazy at best is to build upon sand.

The flight from reality is essentially a flight from thought. It may be occasioned by the aversion to depth on the part of the public, but that demand was created in the first place by the literature it was fed. Unless the literary art is given more devotion than the money it makes, the art itself will disappear through disuse.

MRK

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The ALEMBIC is published bi-monthly by the students of Providence College, Providence, Rhode Island. Entered as second-class matter at the Post Office, Providence, Rhode Island, December 18, 1920, under Act of March 3, 1879. Subscription $2.00 the year. "Acceptance for mailing at special rate of postage provided for in Section 1103. Act of October 3, 1917; authorized April 9, 1932." Printed at the Oxford Press, Providence, Rhode Island.

Journey Into Chaos

By Alfred L. Boning, '48

AS I walked along the ancient road that led from our valley, a paean of triumph bubbled in my throat. I almost broke into song. It was probably the perverse elation that accompanies fear. At any rate I felt free of their caution and timidity, their old-woman snivelings.

"You are crazy, Mur," they had said. Perhaps they were right. But I had been annoyed that they should try to stop me.

Already I approached the top of the road that was older than our written history. In a few minutes I should be farther down that road than any man had dared go within my time.

I paused and looked back. Shan was standing down there before his log hut. Steadying himself with his crutch, he waved and I returned the farewell. A good fellow Shan. It took more than talk to drive the confidence from his cool blue eyes. He would have joined me but for his crippled back.

The others were not so cheerful. Huddled together in the middle of the settlement, they resembled a group of mourners. In my mind's eye I could see the men shaking their heads dazedly and the women speaking among themselves in hushed tones. Even the children were quiet, staying close to the protective skirts of their mothers.

Before continuing I looked once more at the giant bowl that was Tanj, our valley world. The gentle escarpments towering above formed the sides and the oval-shaped floor with its grain fields rippling under the soft wind, the bottom. Wisps of smoke from the log huts spiraled up to the rim of the bowl where they threaded together, melting in the cross-wind.

Beyond the settlement I could see the clear stream that was the source of life in Tanj. It ribboned through the grama grass which fed our cattle. The picture was pleasant, hardly one to exchange for the unknown world that lay just ahead.

But as far back as I could remember, I had been longing to walk through the pass into what I could not imagine. It had been old Dorc who had fanned that desire with his talk of the ancients.

He had brought me up when my parents died. From him I learned all there was to know about our history. There was once a time, he had explained, when men were free to come and go as they pleased. But that had been long ago. He had told me how the ancients had enjoyed an advanced civilization; how they were able to communicate with each other through talking vines; how they made their clothes from plants—and not from the hides of cattle. They had conquered the air and even excelled the birds in flight and had ridden in metal carts that were able to propel themselves by means of marvelous engines. They had instruments that gave a man the voice of a giant. And if he so much as whispered through one of these devices, his words were hurled across mountains, plains and rivers in the twinkling of an eye.

According to the lore that was passed down to us, these people were highly skilled in medicine. It was said that if a man were ailing internally, their doctors were able to look inside him to find the sickness.

These were the things Dorc told of. And they had set my head buzzing until I could think of nothing but the past and what I should someday find beyond the valley.

When I spoke of these things to my playmates, I found myself the object of their parents' wrath. Dorc told me our people held as taboo the mention of the distant past and the unknown death that lay beyond the valley. In fact, it was not even given a name. This fear was ages old and Dorc said that it was responsible for our nebulous history. He said that men do not like to keep alive ugly memories. They bury them deep in their minds, and in time they die there forgotten. Only the remembrance of the fear remains and that never dies. He was a wise old man, this Dorc, and what he said made sense.

From what he had managed to gather in a lifetime of inquiry, men had left the valley. Some of them never returned. Others who had came down with a mortal sickness that had destroyed them.

Of this sickness he knew little. From some he had heard that it was a festering illness that burned out the life. But like everything else, this too was shrouded with uncertainty.

It was this very uncertainty that had made Shan, a playmate of mine, who ignored parental injunctions, and I itch for the day that we should leave Tanj. Dorc promised to join us. But I knew he would not. He was content to muse about these things. That was all.

Periodically he would visit his friends and bid them farewell. Displaying a pack of provisions on his back, he would tell them that at last he had decided to see what lay on the other side of the pass.

He would parade this pathetic heroism with gusto and would stalk toward the pass, his white head held high and what he imagined to be a spring in his step. But he would always permit himself to be swayed by the tears of the women and the protests of the men. Sadly he would return to our hut. For a few days he would not mention the past or the outside world. But his imagination was tinder under the fire of my questions. And he would soon begin planning his next journey.

These "journeys" came to an end when he died last month. I had gained his permission to leave when I reached eighteen summers, which I had today. And Shan, who had been injured three summers ago by a falling tree, was the only person who wished me God-speed with confidence.

These were the thoughts that raced through my mind as I entered the pass. Its trees and grass looked just like those of the valley. I could see nothing unusual and made my way through the hills slightly disappointed at finding nothing out of the way.

By the middle of the afternoon I noticed the forest was thinning. The trees that had not long ago towered over me were now waist-high. When the sun sank from sight beyond a range of mountains to the West, I walked on open grassland and the dwarf trees lay behind.

Soon the grass gave way to dust. And the July moon lay its patina over a bizarre world. The mountains were nothing but piles of dust and the sigh of the wind sweeping down their slopes seemed to mourn their death.

The sudden change from the vegetation in the pass to this wasteland was startling. I could not have felt more alone had I been exploring a desert on another planet.

I finally stopped and curled up beside a rock. Placing my pack under my head, I fell off into a troubled sleep.

On the morning of the next day I spied a vast pile of rubble on a plateau directly to the North. By noon I stood at the edge of what had once been a great city.

The sand and wind had covered most of it. But the far-flung debris indicated that it must have been huge.

Twisted minarets studded the rubble. About them were piles of crushed rock. Here and there I could detect what might have been part of a dwelling. However, it was difficult to be sure. The destruction had been too thorough.

A blood-red sun beat down on the havoc without nourishing life. Not a single blade of grass grew anywhere. There was not even the drone of an insect to break the silence.

The powdery gray dust that clung to everything stung my nostrils. But I scarcely noticed. For a long time I gazed over the ruins, awed. It was as if a vengeful god had flattened the city with a blow of his fist.

The remains bore traces of heat. Some of them had been glazed mirror smooth; others had been seared to a sand-paper roughness. They ranged from boulders to pebbles. And while the large ones had been kneaded into grotesque shapes by the wind, there was the man-touch about them.

If asked to give a description of this scene, I might compare it to an ant hill that has been crushed underfoot. But this would be a puny parable. Human beings had once trod here. On the very spot where I now stood men had bartered and idled, laughed and lived. And their bones

had become part of the dust that had been timelessly working away. The dust had toiled slowly. But it had all eternity to complete its task.

The thought struck me that this place which had once teemed with life must have seemed eternal to its citizens. Actually it had been no more eternal than the butterfly which dances for a bright hour in the sunshine and then finds its destiny in the dust into which all things must resolve.

I wandered through these ruins, prying into them. But I found nothing and was forced to halt my search because of the settling darkness.

The next morning I made a discovery. Sifting through the dust I uncovered a china cup, miraculously intact. It was tiny, and I knew it must have belonged to a child. I saw a little girl pretending to be a woman, primly setting a table. She filled her miniscule china with sweetmeats, trying to tempt the flaxen-haired doll that sat at the table. As children do, she carried on a one-sided conservation as she joined her doll. Her mother looked up from her duties and smiled fondly. And then disaster struck. The table, the little girl and the city were gone and only this delicate cup remained. I cradled it in the center of my palm. It was a pathetic object.

Not far from here I found the remains of what had been a man. His burned husk had been preserved by what I knew not. He had been a large man. That I could see even though he was curled up like an insect that has been scorched by a flame.

As I stepped closer to gaze at his sooty ashes I was amazed to see them disappear before my eyes. Evidently

my very footsteps had been enough to break this spell that had been worked by the ages.

A piece of metal remained where his corpse had been. I examined it closely. It was tubular and closed at one end. There was a metal clasp on it. The clasp bore this inscription—GUARANTEED FOREVER. And as I held it, it crumbled, turning into powder and trickled between my fingers.

As I continued to search through the ruins the melancholy of the place gripped me. I experienced the wild feeling that I was not the sole living thing here. But I forced this thought from my mind by telling myself that there was never anything so dead and empty as this broken shell of a city.

I thought no more of this until the next day. Then I saw them in the dust about a large ruin. Tracks! They were claw-shaped and about half as long as my feet.

I skirted the ruins trying to follow them. As I did, the earth opened up, and I felt myself falling. Then I knew no more.

When I awakened, I found myself in a large hole. The rays of sunlight slanting through the opening indicated it was late afternoon.

I gingerly examined my bones. Nothing was broken. My pack had partially cushioned my fall. I stood up and looked about. The pit was evidently part of a cellar to the ruins above. It was very large and the air was musty.

As my eyes became used to the dim light, I could make out the walls of this cellar and the articles which lay about. They were evidently well preserved. At one time this had been a provision place of some sort. The floor was constructed of black and white stones, all neatly arranged and

cemented together in a beautiful pattern. Truly the ancients were a clever people.

Large glass cases stood about this underground room. They contained what seemed to be clothing. Behind these cases were mirrors. A large glass case in the center of the room had not fared so well as the others. It had been partially melted by the heat, billowing floorward like a frozen fountain. Something embedded in the melted glass caught my attention. It was a piece of fine parchment bearing many inscriptions. I began chipping at the glass with a rock and cut out the chunk that held the parchment. I did not dare free it for fear of destroying it. As it was, much of it was obliterated. I placed it in my pack.

When I broke a glass case containing clothes, these crumbled to dust upon reaching the air.

I was preparing to explore the room farther when I heard a noise behind me. Turning I saw a hideous little animal lying on the floor. At least that was my first impression. But as I watched him writhing there, I noticed something definitely human about him. God knows what it was. No longer than my arm, he looked quite unlike anything I had ever seen, man or animal. His round head was covered with silky white hair.

Have you ever seen a newly hatched owlet? That is the way to describe him with his large yellow eyes and featureless face.

His trunk was more nearly human than any other part of his body. But this was oddly distended, contributing to the bird-like appearance his head presented. With the exception of this latter, he was without hair, and his skin was the color of dough.

shaped mouth, he squealed with delight. The creatures above set up a joyous whimpering. Crowing triumphantly like so many fowl, the little men began dancing up and down on their reedy legs.

I gave the little fellow another piece of beef, and he gulped it down eagerly. As I watched him, I wondered how these miserable wretches existed. But my present situation gave me no time for speculation. I would have quite a task getting out of this ancient cellar.

After working feverishly, I managed to pile all the glass cases together. When I completed this, the group at the mouth of the cavern hooted with glee. The little fellow, still with me, scurried up the cases. I tested the strength of the glass with my foot. It held, and I followed.

Upon reaching the surface, the little men surrounded me, examining my boots and clothes with curiosity. They jabbered excitedly among themselves. Then one who was slightly taller than the rest stepped forward. In his hand he clutched a fat lizard. He thrust it at me, and I understood that he wanted me to have it.

I took the lizard in my hand and tried to indicate my thanks by smiling. He made smacking noises with his lips, and I saw that he wanted me to eat it. But I shook my head. And still smiling, I handed it back to him. Biting off the head, which he spat out like a grape pit, he devoured the lizard with relish.

With alarm I saw that dusk was descending over the ruins. These abject creatures and the haunting melancholy of this once great city filled me with a foreboding I could not define. Perhaps it was a natural depression, caused by the odd and perverse things I had seen. But then and there I decided to return to Tanj. To rationalize my conduct, I

reminded myself that I had but little water remaining in my goatskin pouch.

As I began walking southward through the ruins, the little men followed me, bouncing up and down on their stalk-like legs and piping excitedly. The farther I went the more excited they became, and I knew that they did not want me to leave.

For a moment I was tempted to remain for awhile at least. The desire to study these creatures was strong.

Tilting my head back, I tried to make a water-swallowing sound. They all imitated this, raising their round, fuzzy heads and gurgling in such a serious manner that I would have laughed had I not been filled with a sense of pity for them. They seemed to be harmless creatures, and I wondered how they came to be here and whence they had come. Again I made an imitation of a water-swallowing sound.

The little men began to chatter among themselves. At length the leader indicated that I should follow him. Leading me to a small opening in the earth that was shielded by a rock, he darted underground. In several minutes, he returned with some water held in a rude saucer. I drank it.

As the shadows lengthened among the ruins, the little men reluctantly filed down into the hole. By signs I indicated that I would stay which seemed to please them.

The next morning I was awakened by their shrill voices. As I opened my eyes, I found them ringed about me intently watching me as though I were some odd sort of amiable giant.

For several weeks I stayed with these people, attempting to understand their simple language and searching the debris. Because of my size I was unable to go with them underground into the labyrinths in which they dwelled.

But I did learn that these were quite complex and held their water in several underground streams and also the lizards which constituted their food supply. From what I managed to gather these tunnels were man-made. But the little people who called themselves the Genti had no idea who built them. They had very little knowledge of any sort. Their history was non-existent, and they did not even possess a rudimentary folk-lore.

These little men had an inherent fear of fire. So great was their terror they would remain underground for hours after I had built a blaze to warm my meal of beef. Mox, their leader, could give me no explanation for this. He had never seen a fire, nor had any of his people. There was no word for it in their language. But whenever I extracted my flint from the pack and set about making a fire, they fled with squeaks of terror.

As the days passed I found that I could understand more and more of their language. And I spent hours each day questioning Mox. Sometimes I would be unable to frame my questions because of the limitations of my vocabulary. Other times I was frustrated when I realized their language could rarely cope with anything approaching an abstraction.

I learned that I was the first stranger they had ever seen. Although it was possible that those who preceded me in other generations from Tanj had discovered the ruins, it was something that would probably never be known. These little men lived from day to day, seldom recounting past events.

Once Mox mentioned that Genti women occasionally gave birth to a strange-looking offspring. These children

were larger than was usual, and their features were totally different from those of Genti young.

A wild idea prompted me to ask him if these children looked as if they might belong to my race. He thought they did, but could not be sure. He told me that they never survived infancy.

If what I thought were true, these Genti were a living key to the past. They were the degenerate heirs of the ancients who had escaped the destruction.

Their fear of fire and the seared ruins left no doubt that it was a terrible fire that had scorched the earth and sealed my people in our valley.

Also, the appearance of these Genti showed that the fire contained something far more potent than heat. That force had disrupted their heredity, giving them their fowl-like looks. And it was this force, too, which had made the earth outside Tanj so barren.

I felt elated at having found a few of the answers which I had been seeking. And I intended to return here for a more thorough investigation. But now I wanted to go back to Tanj with news of my discoveries.

While preparing to return, the first signs of the sickness appeared. I was seized by violent headaches, stronger than any I had ever known.

The journey back was a nightmare. It took me twice as long to return as it had to come. Fits of fatigue and despondency plagued me, and the headaches increased. I knew that I had contracted the illness that Dorc had spoken of. And I have found another question to which I shall never know the answer. How do the Genti escape this sickness? Perhaps they have an immunity to it. But that will be for someone else to answer.

Shan has written down this account exactly as I have told it. He will also copy the inscriptions from the parchment in the glass so that he or some scholar to come may decipher them and possibly uncover another fact in the forgotten history of Tanj and the great destruction of long ago. I have made him promise to bury this glass so that it will not contaminate. Here is what he is able to copy from the faded parchment.

DENVER TIMES

NO ATOMIC WARFARE IN OUR TIME SAYS CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEE

Military and Nuclear Scientists Scored for 'Unresponsible Talk'

Washington, Nov. 8— (World News) —In a two-hour report to Congress the Morgan Committee, recently appointed by the President to investigate the cause for the present atom jitters, disclosed there is little to justify fear of atom warfare.

Representative William G. Morgan, committee chairman, told the House "The responsibility for the recent atom panics should be placed on the doorsteps of a few self-seeking military and nuclear physicists who are specialists and not qualified to make general interpretations.

"We have good reason to believe that no other nation has developed the atom bomb," Morgan said. "At least, they have not tested it because it would have registered on our radioactivity detectors."

He cited as extreme alarmists the people who have fled to the Arkansas River Valley, below Denver, in the hope they would find protection from radioactivity in the lead-lined valleys of that section.

"The Uncertain Mind"

By Wales B. Henry, '50

I fear that in my ignorance
I know little of the things of which Life is made,
For my existence appears to me
To be composed of emotions only.
I feel the swirl of the maelstrom of Being,
Twirling and spinning, grasping and holding me.
And I, I alone, into its maddening rush am swept,
While all Humanity looks on,
With contenance of smug approbation,
Content with the knowledge that of them,
One, one alone, knows not the essence of his composition;
Or so it seems to me.

For if my mind, my intellect, could cope
With the problems thrust at it
Through chance or circumstance, and answer or explain
The doubts and uncertainties that assail me.
Then truly would I be at rest.
And I could face Humanity
With the knowledge that I too
Was confident of the course laid down
For me to pursue, and understanding this
I could wend my way
Through the labyrinthine paths of human experience

With emotion fully subordinated to reason and volition.
I have had cognizance of many things
And, although my span of years has been short,
My perceptions have been quickened
And my conceptions and judgements matured
By an ideology of self-perpetuation
Altogether incongruent with the youthful level
Of my physical development,
Yet in complete harmony with the cataclysmic
Instability of a chaotic world.

I have come to experience too much
Before I knew the true meaning of it,
For my mind has deluded me
With a false sense of knowledge.
Now I feel that I have been unable
To reconcile the events of my experience
To their proper places in the anatomy of Life.
I lack a sense of the fitness of things
And a knowledge of proper proportion.
In this I am sad and I yearn to rectify
The errors of my judgement.

What is Hope but desire,
With the expectation of obtaining
That which is desired because it is good
And within the realm of possibility.
And it seems that we live always
With Hope in our breast.
But, when some ambitions are realized,

The Uncertain Mind

Ambitions that were seemingily good
And worthy to be hoped for, we find
That the fullfillment of them
Gives us not the satisfaction anticipated.
And we wish again for some greater good.
Yet there are some things that are for the individual
Unobtainable, or seem to be so,
And the heart that was one moment
Filled with Hope,
Is cast into the colorless abyss of Despair.
Hope, like the effervescence of soda,
Which foams its short lived life
And then is nothingness,
Is a thing which I do not fully understand.

And what of Courage?
It is visualized by some as a state of mind,
Reflected in the actions of those
Who face danger and difficulty with resolution.
It is a good, perceived and respected
In those who have it.
But who can tell of the innermost working
Of the heart of another man?
I have known fear to walk hand in hand
With the most undaunted soul.
Even in our own acts, how much is prompted
By the courageous manifestation
Of a genuine love of God, but rather yet—
How deep is our fear of the threat of Hell?
It is that courage is bred from fear?
And if fear is the motivating factor

Behind our display of intrepidity or fortitude,
At what point in our human weakness
Will fear overcome our courage
And reduce us to the shivering coward?
The will to do right is courage,
But man is a weak animal.
One does not know when the test will come,
But in the arena of temptable life,
I pray God will give me Grace to banish fear
And understand and maintain the right.

Love—a cruel jest in a velvet wrap.
Bitter fruit, growing wild, eagerly plucked
And digested before it can be spit out.
Yet we acquire a taste for it.
Love is too diversified;
It includes too many things.
Love of God, the only Good, alas, we take for granted,
Spurning His gifts, repaying His beneficence with Sin.
Love of self, we have always with us,
Placing our minute being on an elevated plane.
Love of material things is our downfall,
For temporal pleasure puts aside
The reason for our existence.
Love of a woman is unpredictable.
It is waiting and sorrow,
A quickened heart-beat and a soft word.
It is the stuff of which dreams are made
And realities softened.
Its compensations are multitudinous,
But it is a rocky path which I have walked along,

The Uncertain Mind

Learning little, forgiving much, and wanting more.
Love, like a string of lights on a Christmas tree,
Adds brightness to Life—but is often defective.

Happiness is the main pursuit of man.
Pleasure in any form is welcome to the heart.
And yet, what real joy is there
But is not passing, of the moment—and then
Concurrent with its loss, we search for it again.
Could it be that therein is our joy?
The expectation, never fully realized—but hoped for.
The anticipation, never gained—but enjoyed in itself.
Happiness is like the dinner guest
Who comes and entertains us for a time.
But he eats too much, and the food bill is heavy.
Happiness is a coin,
The reverse of which is sorrow.

On these things and many more,
I ponder with uncertain mind,
Asking questions, seeking answers
To the doubts that plague me;
For living is not an easy task
Yet we are alive and must live.
The intellect of man must develop
In ratio to the passing of the years.
Yet as I learn, the more I am aware
Of how little I know
And how vast is the field of knowledge
Yet unopened before me.

But of three things I am sure:
The years remaining may be short
But I will live them to their fullness;
The Gates of Wisdom are never closed
To those willing to turn the key;
There is a God Who will guide me
And provide the instruments
For my search of the Truth.

Man to His Soul

By George Hunter Cochran, '51

Where goest thou? in good or sin
The outward man doth show within.
A book the cover will not make,
Nor man his inmost heart forsake.
Seek not the things which will not be,
Nor spurn that which thou canst not see,
For faith is oft'n both part and whole,
The open window of the soul.
Look not upon iniquities;
Man must be blind before he sees.
There is no way but that of strife,
Where life is death, and death is life.

Turret and Tree

By Raymond D'Ambrosio, '51

Based on the poem The Sisters by Alfred Lord Tennyson

THE room was dark and so was the day that looked in through the window. But Claire Rich, sitting in a huge chair before an unlit fireplace, didn't mind the murky gloominess. It seemed to soothe her, to make her forget all the tragedy and sadness that she had known for the past few weeks. The blackness, with kind, soft fingers, rubbed ever so gently against her tired eyes, and the stinging, the incessant, painful stinging lessened and finally stopped. Then, a slight smile—it was a long time since she had smiled—flitted across her face. A soft sigh, that seemed to echo through the intense silence of the room, came from her, and with *flaccid* hands, she held on to the arms of the chair. Suddenly, she believed that she was drifting, slowly and soothingly, into space, and instead of being afraid, she was strangely happy. Fervently, enthusiastically, tearfully, she prayed that she would never return to the inky black room and to reality —frightening reality.

The door opened, and light, like the onrushing water of a broken dam, flooded the room and drowned the darkness. A woman, tall, gaunt, with round introspective eyes and greyish-black hair that was pulled into a bun in the back of her head, entered and walked over to the chair in which Claire sat. For a moment, the woman gazed down at the

sleeping girl. She hesitated before wakening her, for she knew how long it had been since she, Claire, had slept last. It was a shame to interrupt her peaceful sleep, but it was necessary. So, lifting a gnarled hand, she shook Claire's shoulder very gently, at the same time calling her by name.

At first Claire thought she was dreaming, and that the voice, which seemed to be coming from afar, was part of her dream. But, then, she felt the hand shaking her shoulder, and, opening her eyes, she turned to see who was next to her.

"I'm sorry if I frightened you, Miss Claire," Laurena said, looking at Claire's wan, thin face.

"Oh, it's you, Laurena," she uttered, relieved. "I thought I was dreaming." She sank back into the warm, comforting softness of the chair, for the strong light, falling through the doorway, beat against her puffed eyes ferociously. "What is it?" she asked the housekeeper.

"I wouldn't have waken you if it hadn't been extremely important," she explained. Stopping, she waited for a second, then went on. "They found him. They found Jonas." She observed that Claire's hands tightly gripped the chair, so that her knuckles humped up and her skin became white and taut. "They found him this morning in a shack over in Tallystown. They knew how anxious you were to see him, so instead of bringing him directly to the sheriff, they brought him here first. Do you think you feel well enough to see him?"

Nodding, Claire murmured, "Yes. Tell him to come in."

Laurena turned and started out of the room. "Send him in alone," Claire instructed her.

"All right, Miss Claire." The oak door shut out the light, and sweet darkness regained its throne.

After a minute had passed, Claire rose from her chair, crossed the obscure room, and turned on a light in a lamp. It was a dull light that brightened only the objects around the lamp and a small space on the carpeted floor. The rest of the room was still in complete darkness.

Leaning against a large desk, she gazed through the window at the sky, in which a pall of portentous black clouds rested oppressively. Suddenly, a streak of lightning illuminated the room, causing the light to dim; and then, lightning's confederate, thunder, laughed loudly and contemptuously. Then there was silence.

The door opened, and a medium-sized, broad shouldered, rather stout man entered, followed by Laurena.

"The men said if you want them, just call. They'll be outside the door," Laurena told her. She waited for Claire to say something, to give her some instructions; but, receiving none, she left the two alone.

It was evident that the man was nervous, for he played with the battered hat in his hand. Perspiration covered his forehead. Fear blazed in his black, quickly-moving eyes. And his dry tongue passed over his thick, cracked lips. He stood very close to the door, staring at Claire, whose face was not visible for the light stopped at her neck. She looked like a headless apparition, and this fact made the Negro fear her. Finally, mustering all his courage, he said, stammering, "Is—is tha' ya, Mis' Cla're?" There was no answer. His calloused hand squeezed the hat violently. In a timorous voice, he repeated, "Is tha' ya, Mis' Cla're?"

Softly, evenly, she said, "Why did you do it, Jonas?"

"Do wha', Mis' Cla're?" he asked, knowing what she meant.

"Why did you kill my sister Dorothy?" She said this calmly, as if she were asking him for a cigarette.

"I didn't! I didn't!" he exclaimed, taking a step toward her. "I didn't! I told those men who brung me here, I didn't kill Mis' Dor'thy. But they didn't believe me. Ya gotta believe me, Mis' Cla're!" he cried beseechingly. "Ya gotta."

She remained by the desk, apathetic, quiet, tired. Although she could barely discern Jonas in the hazy dimness, she could tell by his imploring tone, that he was distressed and frightened.

"If you didn't kill her, why did you run away? Why did you hide-out? Why didn't you return? Your having done these things proves you're guilty."

He opened his mouth as if to put forward some reason for his strange behavior; but he said nothing. "I didn't do it," he reiterated.

Why does he keep saying that, Claire thought. Does he think that by repeating that phrase over and over again, he will finally make me believe in his innocence?

"You know, Jonas, you were seen running away from the body that night. So there is no use of your lying."

As he ran over to her, she grabbed the sharp-pointed letter opener that lay on the desk to protect herself.

"Who seen me?" he demanded in a hoarse voice. "Who seen me?"

Seeing his dilated eyes and drawn face, upon which the pale light fell, giving him an eerie look, she tightened her grasp on the letter opener, that she hid behind her. But she did not move away from him. "If you remember," she said, speaking in a whisper, "there was a full moon the night of my sister's death. And Lawrence Taber, who was coming

to call on my sister, could see your face clearly in the moonlight as you leaned over Dorothy's body. If it weren't for him, we would never have known who had killed her."

Jonas was taken aback by her words. Many minutes passed before he spoke, and when he did, his voice was low. "Mr. Taber. Mr. Taber. He seen me?"

She nodded her head. "Yes, so you don't have to lie. You murdered Dorothy, and what I want to know is why. Why did you do it, Jonas? She had always treated you well. Please, to ease my turbulent mind, tell me." It was she who was begging him now.

"I'll tell ya, Mis' Cla're," he said breathlessly. "I'll tell ya." Upon hearing the rumble of thunder, he turned his head toward the window. Then, he began. "It was a very bright night tha' Mis' Dor'thy was killed. I 'member because I was walkin' by the river, and I 'member thinkin' tha' moonlight made the waves look like di'monds, and I was plannin' wha' I'd do if I owned all those di'monds." He stopped, swallowed, and moved closer to Claire, who hadn't released her grasp on the letter opener. "As I walked along, I heard loud voices, not good voices, but mad, evil voices, like the debil hisself. I could see two figures near the river's edge, so I hid behind some bushes so I wouldn't be seen. The people was yelling, and I seen that it was Mis' Dor'thy and Mr. Taber." The metal letter opener made a soft thud as it fell from Claire's hand to the desk top. A faint glow started in her heavy, unhappy eyes. Jonas knew that his words had incited her, so he continued. "Suddenly, I seen him put his hands 'round Mis' Dor'thy's throat, and she hit him with her fist. She fought and fought; but it was no use. I was so afraid, Mis' Cla're, tha' I couldn't move. But, finally, I overcame my fear and moved as quiet as I could

from behind the bushes. But Mr. Taber, he he'rd the branches of the bush crack and he turned, lettin' Mis' Dor'thy fall dead. Oh, his face, Mis' Cla're, when he seen me. I couldn't move, for my legs were stone. When he was almost in front of me, I yelled and ran and he chased me. I ran and ran, and all the time he followed me, yellin', 'I'll kill ya, nigger!' Oh, Mis' Cla're, how I did run that night. I ran till I got a pain in my side, and I couldn't breath. All the time I could here his voice: 'I'll kill ya, nigger! I'll kill ya!' But, he never caught me. I guess he got tired and gave me up. That's why I never come back, Mis' Cla're. I was sure Mr. Taber would kill me, and he will! I know he will! You gotta help me, Mis' Cla're! You gotta!"

Jonas' speech brought Claire out of her lethargy, and once again she was alive. A deep red hue rose in her cheeks and finally suffused her pale face, which had lost its death-like mask. Her brow was furrowed with disbelief, but her lifeless eyes, now blazing, spoke her bitter thoughts of revenge as loudly and clearly as any audible word.

"You lie!" she shouted, grabbing him by the shoulders. "You lie! You lie! Tell me the truth!"

"I did, Mis' Cla're. I swear I did," he quavered. Little streams of perspiration, sparkling like bracelets beset with diamonds, trickled down Jonas' black face, which she scrutinized, waiting for some fleeting glare in his eyes, some quick change of expression to refute his statement. But, truth shone in his eyes, and the lines of truth formed his painful expression.

Letting her hands fall weakly to her side, she said, softly, "I believe you, Jonas."

He sighed deeply, happily, and his lips spread into a broad smile. "Will ya tell the p'licemen tha' I didn't kill Mis' Dor'thy, Mis' Cla're? They'll listen to ya."

"I'm afraid they wouldn't listen to me, Jonas." His smile disappeared. "You see, I said *I* believe you, but Mr. Taber told the police that he saw you kill Dorothy, and I'm sure that they'll believe him and not you."

Nodding his head dejectedly, he said, "I guess they will. But you believe me, Mis' Cla're. Why?"

She walked from him, and was enveloped in the darkness of the room. It seemed an aeon before he saw her tall, slender figure silhouetted against the window. "I knew that Larry—Mr. Taber—was in love with Dorothy; but I also knew that she didn't love him. In fact, she told me that she hated him, that there was something about him that frightened her, and that she wanted to get away from him. She was on her way to his house the night that he—he—," she stammered, for the hateful word murder stuck in her throat. "She wanted to tell him that they were through and that she was going away. But, they must have met near the river and she must have told him then and there, that she was going to leave him." Turning toward Jonas, she asked, "Do you recall what they were talking about?"

He thought hard for a minute, cudgeling his chaotic mind. Before he answered, lightning once again lit the room, and thunder roared across the heavens. Then a deluge of rain fell furiously to earth, the falling drops knocking against the window as if desiring to gain entrance.

"I 'member he'rin' Mis' Dor'thy saying' tha' she was goin' away for good. Mr. Taber, he got mad when she said this and he grabbed a hold of her and said, 'Ya can't go! I won't let ya!' That's all I 'member," he said, looking down at his feet as if he were ashamed of himself for not being able to give her more information.

"You've told me enough, Jonas," she said, walking

back to him. The wan light of the lamp fell on her face, and for the first time he could see her heavy eyes and dead-white skin. "You can go now, Jonas," she told him.

His lower lip quivered and his voice shook as he said, "But, Mis' Cla're, ain't ya goin' to tell the p'lice tha' I didn't kill Mis' Dor'thy? Ain't ya goin' to tell them I'm innacin?"

"Jonas, you go with the police who are waiting for you, and I promise that tomorrow you'll leave the jail a free man. When I have evidence of your innocence, I'll go to the police. And I intend to get the evidence tonight."

He hesitated before answering. "All right," he murmured, "I'll go with them." Then laggardly, he walked across the room to the door. "Ya do believe me, don't ya Mis' Cla're?" he asked.

"Yes, I do. And I promise you'll be out of jail tomorrow."

As he opened the door, he tried to convince himself that with the dawning of a new day he would be free; but he couldn't.

When he was done, Claire lifted the receiver of the telephone that was on the desk and dialed a number. She waited for a minute or two, and then she heard Larry's metallic voice: "Hello."

"Hello, Larry?"

"Yes."

"This is Claire. Claire Rich."

"Oh, yes, Claire. How are you?"

"Fine. And you?"

"Fine, too. I haven't heard from you since—since," he stammered.

They were silent.

"Larry, I was wondering, if you haven't any previous engagement, would you come over for supper tonight? I realize it's short notice, but I'd appreciate it very much."

"Well, I—I," he floundered, completely surprised.

"I've been so lonely, I haven't seen many people lately. And—"

Before she could go on, his metallic voice came through the phone. "I'll be glad to come, Claire."

"Oh, that's splendid. Eight o'clock all right?"

"Yes."

"I'll be waiting for you, so don't forget."

"I won't. Goodbye."

"Goodbye, Larry."

Placing the receiver down, she smiled wryly. For a long time she stood by the desk, hate, like a hungry parasite, gnawing at her heart, and her eyes, large, sparkling, staring intently at the marble-handled letter opener, its sharp-pointed metal blade gleaming. Outside, the day had slowly waned and night now cloaked the world about the house. And the rain fell unceasingly, depressingly, in slanting, opaque sheets. Turning she crossed the room to tell Laurena to set an extra place at the table for they were having a guest for supper.

Laurena opened the door just wide enough to allow the drenched figure of Lawrence Taber to enter and to keep the inclement weather out.

"Wet out tonight," he said, removing his soaked hat. A little stream of water that had collected in the rim dripped to the floor as he handed the hat to Laurena, who held it at arms length.

"Miss Claire is in the parlor, Mr. Taber," she told him, taking his sodden coat, the rain drops on it glistening.

"Thank you, Laurena." He walked down the hallway to the parlor door. Knocking, he entered and stopped just inside the doorway as if a brick wall obstructed his way. But, a brick wall is cold, lifeless, incapable of starting a strange tingling in a man's heart, a tingling that spreads through him, making his senses keener, his breathing uneven, and his hands unsteady. No, what stopped Lawrence Taber dead-in-his-tracks was Claire, who stood in front of the fireplace, a low-cut, green evening gown clinging tightly to the sinuous contours of her figure. Her midnight-black tresses lay languidly on her bare pearl-white shoulders. Larry stared at her incredulously. All night he had expected to find a grief-ridden, red-eyed mourner, attired in a somber black and not an exciting green. No, he was not prepared for an enticing Claire. Yet, he was glad that she hadn't allowed her sister's death to depress her. She is beauiful, he thought. Even more beautiful than Dorothy.

Larry did not observe Claire's bleak, revengeful eyes, otherwise he would have realized that this meretricious facade was part of a plan—a precise, foolproof plan.

"I'm glad you came, Larry," she said, not moving.

"I'm glad *I* came. I hadn't expected to see you so—so—" he couldn't think of an appropriate word.

"I know what you mean, Larry. You thought I'd be wearing mourning clothes. But, tonight is a special occassion, so I decided to dress accordingly. You and I are going to celebrate the apprehension of Dorothy's murderer."

"Jonas? I'm glad. Did you find out why he did it? I can't imagine what motivated the crime."

Oh, how I hate your feigned ignorance, your pretended friendliness! No reprisal will be too severe for you! Your dying will not atone for my sister's murder. You should die

a hundred, a thousand times and each death should be more painful, more agonizing, more horrible.

"I want to thank you, Larry," she said in a calm voice that did not give away her evil thoughts, "if it hadn't been for you, we would never have known who killed Dorothy. It was a great stroke of luck that you should have been walking here that night."

"Yes," he agreed. "I guess it was fate." His brown eyes narrowed and his voice became a whisper filled with venom. "When I saw what that nigger Jonas had done, I chased him, hoping to catch him so that I could kill him as brutally as he had murdered Dorothy. But he managed to elude me. Still I searched for him behind every bush, every tree, every—" he stopped abruptly, realizing that his whisper had become as loud as a blaring trumpet. Smiling, embarrassed by his outburst, he explained, "I get angry every time I thing of that nigger. Excuse me, Claire."

"Of course." Tomorrow Jonas, she thought. Tomorrow you will be free. Tomorrow. "Have a cigarette?" she asked.

He took the cigarette proffered him, tapped each end on the top of his hand a few times, lit it, and exhaled a hazy cloud of grey smoke that floated upward and then disappeared like a ghost.

Laurena opened the door and announced that dinner was ready. Claire and Larry walked to the dining-room, where they sat at a long table. As they ate they talked about various things, but never Dorothy. Claire knew that he was particularly avoiding that subject. So, when there was a pause in the desultory conversation, she said, "You loved her very much, didn't you, Larry?"

"Yes," he uttered, knowing of whom she was speaking.

"And she worshipped you," she lied. "If only this horrible thing hadn't happened. You could have been so terribly happy together."

"I'll be happy the day that nigger dies for murdering her. Once again," he smiled, lifting a long-stemmed glass filled to the brim with blood-red wine, "justice has triumphed." He emptied the glass.

No, dear Larry, justice has not triumphed. But it will.

After they had finished supper, they retired to the parlor. Claire, sitting across from him, her cold eyes never leaving his handsome face, feared that her great hate for him would show in her actions, in her expression, in her speech. But she needn't have worried for she had him completely beguiled.

"Do you want to dance?" she asked.

Larry was stunned and perplexed. Frowning, he said, "I don't understand you, Claire. Your sister died only a few weeks ago and you don't seem to be extremely unhappy about it. I thought you were the type of girl who would mourn and mourn for the demise. On the way over here tonight, I kept picturing you in a somber black dress, black shoes, and even black stockings. I was positive that you were the type who wouldn't listen to the radio for a few months, who wouldn't go to the movies, and who would remain in this house, like a hermit, day in and day out. But, instead, I find you dressed in a most revealing gown, waiting for me to dance with you."

"You're old-fashioned, Larry. Dorothy's dead, and nothing will bring her back. So why should I give up everything I like just for convention's sake?"

"But, you should have more respect for the dead," he explained.

"I have much respect for the dead," she said quickly. She fell into a large chair. Then, covering her eyes with her hands, she murmured, "I'm a fraud, Larry. I'm not so hard as I appear to be. All I've done, I've done out of loneliness and sadness. You see, I asked you over for supper for a reason. Not to celebrate Jonas' capture, but the same reason I wore this gown and wanted to dance: to forget, to forget Dorothy and everything. But, I have continually mentioned her, unintentionally, unmeaningly. She's in my mind, and I'm afraid I'll never forget her until I die."

Going over to her and standing by her chair, he said, "You've gone through a lot, Claire. I know how you feel, for I, too, miss Dorothy. But she is with me always, more so now than when she was alive. We'll have to find a way to drive her from our minds, or we'll never know happiness or peace of mind again."

What hypocrisy! What crawling, stinking hypocricy! "We'll never know happiness again." As if you could ever be happy after what you've done. All your nights will be nightmares; all your days will be filled with fear. You'll never rid yourself of Dorothy's memory, no matter how hard you try. For she'll be there always. Always! Always!

"Yes, I suppose you're right, Larry," she agreed. "We'll have to find a way to forget her. But it will be difficult."

"Yet, you must try."

"I will. I promise I will."

He sighed. Then, looking up at the clock on the mantel, he said, "I'll have to be going, Claire. It's nine-thirty and you must be tired."

It had come: the moment she had dreaded all evening. Now she must humiliate herself. But she would find satisfaction in her humiliation.

The room was silent, except for the rain drops that hammered against the window.

"Larry," she began calmly, "please don't go."

For Larry, this was a night of surprises. "What—what do you mean?"

"Please don't go. Stay here with me." Seeing that his eyes clouded, she pleaded, "I'm so terribly lonely in this house I think I shall go mad if I have to pass another night here alone. Oh, please, please stay! I don't care what you may think of me, but please stay!"

A long minute went by while he studied her. That she was beautiful was the first thing he had noticed upon entering the room that evening. That her face was softly radiant when sad, giving her an almost celestial beauty, that her black hair was like a calm sea gleaming in the moonlight, and that her lips were an enticing red, he had not observed until now. To think he had loved Dorothy when he could have had Claire, who was more beautiful than her sister.

"Of course I'll stay, if you want me to," he answered, the wind screaming at the window.

To Claire, the dance music that emanated from the radio seemed at times to come from another world, a million miles away. Yet, at other times, the noisy tones seemed to resound through the room, bang against her ears with the fury of a hurricane, and then pound their way to her brain, against which they beat unmercifully. No longer did she wish to be held in Larry's arms and dance. She wanted to drop into a chair and sleep and sleep until even sleep hurt. But, there was Larry. Larry, who had murdered Dorothy. Larry, who wished to see Jonas dead. Larry, who unwittingly had walked into a trap from which there was no escape.

"Let's stop for a minute, Larry," she said, moving from him.

"Feel tired?" he asked, sitting next to her on the couch.

"A bit."

"Sure you don't want me to leave?"

"No," she replied quickly. "I'd die of depression."

They were silent for a minute; then, "You know, Claire, you look a lot like Dorothy, except that you're more beautiful than she was. Odd that I never noticed it until tonight. And I've always given myself credit for being a discerning fellow. But yours is a peculiar, eluding type of beauty. When you're happy, it's there, but it's not so breath-taking. When you're unhappy, it smacks you right in the face. Right now, you're so beautiful that even the coldest of men could not resist you." He leaned toward her. There eyes met. Then he pressed his lips softly against hers.

He thinks I expect this of him, she ruminated. I'm glad that he's getting romantic, for it'll make things easier.

"Oh, Larry," she whispered, her cheek against his, "don't leave me! Don't leave me!"

"I won't. I never will." They kissed, her body shivering as their lips met.

Suddenly, she rose and walked over to the fireplace, her back to him.

"What's wrong?" he queried.

"I feel guilty, Larry."

"Guilty? About what?"

"Dorothy's been dead only a few weeks. And you were her—her—"

"But," he said, going over to her and placing his hands on her white shoulders, "Dorothy is dead. Gone. She can

never return. We're still young and alive, and as long as we are, we can't stop loving. Dorothy is in her grave where—"

"Larry," she interrupted him, "this doesn't sound like you. Why, you sound as if you—you didn't love Dorothy." Feigned grief and bewilderment shone in her eyes; but Larry saw something else in them, something beyond the grief and bewilderment, and that ineffable something frightened him. Was Claire laughing at him? No. Of course not.

"This may come as a shock to you, Claire, but I *didn't* love Dorothy any longer. In fact, I had set out to tell her just that the night Jonas murdered her. I hope you don't think badly of me?"

"Of course not," she answered, not being able to keep a little asperity out of her voice. "I suppose you can't stop a person from loving." She walked over to the couch and sat in one corner. "I'm glad you don't love her."

"Why?" he asked, staring intently at her. She was beautiful! Painfully beautiful!

Without hesitating, she told him, "Because I love you. I know you must think me a brazen woman, Larry, but I've loved you ever since the first day I saw you. No matter how hard I tried I could never understand why you loved Dorothy and not me. Oh, I know, it must have been wrong for me to do so, but I prayed for something to happen to her so that you would notice me." If she hadn't hated him so greatly, and if she hadn't known that the statement was necessary to the part she was playing, Claire would never have uttered, "I'm glad Dorothy is dead."

He went over to her and, smiling, grabbed her weak hand so that she rose and faced him. His warm, passionate kiss was like a confession to Claire. If she had had any doubts about Larry's having killed her sister, they were all effaced from her mind now.

"Oh, Larry, Larry! I've waited so long for you," she lied, despising every word she spoke. "You're mine now, not Dorothy's! Mine! Mine!"

The clock on the mantel tingled out the third hour of morning. Claire glanced around the room, which was dark except for one light, and the intense quiet made her tremble slightly. All that could be heard was the keening wind and mocking rain.

"Claire," Larry whispered, sprawled on the couch, his head resting on Claire's lap.

"Yes? What is it?"

"Kiss me."

Leaning over, she kissed him full on the lips, noticing at the same time his half-closed eyes. She passed her hand through his tawny hair, softly, continuously like a lullaby, lulling him to sleep.

"You know, Claire," he murmured in a slow, tired voice, "I should have loved you from the start. If I had, nothing would have happened. This nightmare would only be a nightmare. Now I'm afraid." He stopped and stared up at her. "Claire," he uttered beseechingly, "kiss me and say you love me." Tenderly she kissed his forehead, his eyes, his lips. "Someday," he went on to say, his voice growing softer, his speech becoming more inarticulate, "I'll tell you—you what hap—happened. Oh, Claire," he sighed, "I'm sleepy. I haven't slept in weeks and weeks. I've—I've been afraid to. But—but now I feel like sleeping. I feel peaceful an—and easy when you're near me."

"You go to sleep, darling. I'll sit here and watch you."

"Won't you be uncomfortable?" His eyes were slits now.

"No, darling. You sleep," she urged him gently. "I know that you're tired." Looking down at him, she saw that his eyes were closed. His breathing was even and his sleep was deep.

How can he rest so tranquilly after committing such an infamous crime. But, do not worry, dear Larry, yours will be a serene and uninterrupted sleep.

The clock showed three-thirty. The squalling wind seemed to resound through the room; the quiet crept into every corner. And Larry slept calmly.

It was four o'clock when Claire dared to move. Ever so slowly she slipped his head off her lap. He turned and mumbled something and, for a fearful moment, she was sure that he was going to awaken. But, he didn't.

Like a somnambulist, she walked from the couch to the desk. The silver metal of the letter opener, that lay on the desk top, reflected the dim light, which made it, the letter opener, gleam brillantly. With a trembling hand, she picked it up, the wind howling outside in the cold, wet night, like a hell-bound soul. Holding the weapon at arms length, she stared at it, her eyes large and blazing and incredulous, as if she could not believe that she held it.

Slowly, the needle-thin point of the letter opener shining like a thousand little stars, she moved toward the couch upon which the unsuspecting Larry slept. For a minute or two, she stood by the couch, that was to be his death bier, gazing down at him, her lips curled into a hateful smirk, which changed to a victorious smile.

Sleep, dear, dear Larry, she said to herself, happily. Sleep, you murderer of my sister. Sleep, for this will be an endless sleep. You'll never waken to enjoy sweet life. Go,

you murderer, go to hell, and may you suffer throughout eternity.

She lifted the letter opener above his body. The screeching wind blew through the walls, swirled around her head, and thundered in her ears, causing the stinging pain to return. Louder and louder it grew. Her head ached excruciatingly. A deep pounding echoed in her mind. It must stop! It must! It must!

Her hand fell quickly. Once! Twice! Thrice! Then the pounding stopped. The pain ceased. The wind became a whisper.

There was no horror, no panic, no contrition in Claire at seeing what she had done. She had lied and planned and humiliated herself all night just for this moment. Now she felt that Dorothy's death had been avenged. Only to Jonas must she keep her inviolable promise: that he would be free.

Taking a cigarette from a box on a coffee table, she lit it and then blew out a cloud of filmy, white smoke. As she inhaled the soothing sweetness of the tobacco, she gazed at Larry's lifeless body. The grey marble handle of the letter opener protruded from his back, and from the other two wounds blood flowed out, spotting his blue jacket with the dark liquid.

She pressed the cigarette out in an ash tray, and then lifted the receiver of the telephone. With a steady finger, she dialed a number. As she waited for someone on the other end to answer, a strange warmth surged through her, burning all the fear and sadness that had harassed her for the past weeks, leaving only peace and satisfaction in its wake.

"Hello," a drowsy voice said.

"Is this the sheriff?"

"Ah huh. Who's this?" he demanded, angry at having been awakened in the dead of night.

"Claire Rich."

"Oh, Miss Rich," he said, surprised. "What's the matter?"

She didn't hesitate. "I want to report a murder. A murder that I committed."

Beyond hearing his shocked gasp, her ears were impenetrable to his disjointed question. All she could think of now was that she had kept her promise to Jonas. He would go free when she'd tell the police the truth about Dorothy's murder. She had failed neither Jonas nor Dorothy.

Social Justice

By Normand Goulet, '51

Must I raise my feeble voice,
To plead my sister's right of choice?
Must I bear false testimony,
At the bar of matrimony?

Oh let her carry forth her plan,
'Tis divine to snare her man.
Since the day she learned to creep,
She's had male-folk at her feet.

Could I be so basely stupid?
Should I cast a stone at Cupid?
Oh let her cast her lot with faith.
She has rights, at thirty-eight.

Resume

By Robert E. Doherty, '49

You had come home from the wars
And the wars had come home with you:
Parents rejoiced, bands blared
And everyone joined in laughter.

Behind you in a thousand various wakes
Which ranged from Iwo Jima
To the site of the Bulge
The dirt was piled high into little mounds.
The phantoms of Pacific casualties
Glided through the jungle on tropical breezes
And the ghosts of Remagen
Flitted among the German forests.
These were the spirits of unreturned youth
Who died believing.

Yes, you had come home from the wars
And you were known as "veterans".
You were distinguished by an emblem
And all the store windows
Reminded the public
That you were to be honored.

Children made you the neighborhood heroes
And boasted that they knew you;

They went out of their way to speak to you
Because there were ribbons on your chest.
Adults acclaimed you as saviors,
A nation sighed relief.

Perhaps, during those jubilant times
You recalled your fathers' and uncles' stories—
This same scene was enacted twenty some years ago.
And perhaps you wondered—
"How long will it last this time?
How long will the promise of Peace
Remain on the horizon?"

But, meanwhile, you were your families' pride
And were marched from house to house
In consequent display—
Accepting the toast, denying flattery,
Acting the role of the polite,
With a smile, a curt but smooth "thank you"
You endured the prying hosts.

But before long the people realized
That there had been a change in you.
Too many of them realized it perhaps.
The entire country, through the radio and press
Was in sympathy for you
And considered it a duty
To rehabilitate you.

Many parents were worried.
You had returned an older person
Whereas they remembered you as a boy.

Then the medicinal apostles of the nation
Declared that combat and travel
Could produce additional characteristics
And the country became "neurotic conscious".
For a while society catered to you.
If you didn't give the right answer
At the right time,
Or if you refused to concede
Some of your "accumulated" convictions
You were excused "because of the war".

Still, those of the home front
Found cause in you to wonder.
And they did.
When it was said that "All is well",
They wanted to know what made you smile
In such manner that they knew
All was *not* well
Though they had no reason
For the fact that they accepted.
Why was it that when they read aloud
That the crosses burned again in Georgia
You smiled grimly but made no comment?
Why was it that if you returned from Europe
Some radio-warrior reminded you
That you were lucky not to have been in the Pacific?
Why was it that your body tensed
When some omniscient adult
Officiously stated that "There will be another war"?
Why was it that sometimes in society
Your being was gripped with the desire
To see your company hurled
Into the Chaos from whence you had returned?

You were rather helpless then.
Yes, you were very helpless.
For you knew that the "Whys" and "Wherefores"
Lay hidden in your incommunicable
Learnings of life.
Perhaps at times you wished to cry
"Listen, people, my learnings are from my memories
And though both are from another world
They are applicable here!"

But it was easy for them
To recall what you forgot—
And it was impossible for them to know
Of what you must recall:
They couldn't realize
That hauntings welled forth from a more recent past—
A far more impressive past because of its confusion
And its absconded meaning.
They couldn't know the consequences of a mind
Which had harbored or endured the throes
Of concomitant Faith, Despair, Fear and strange Courage.
However, if at times you did
Voice sentiments born of the war-years
To parents or intimate friends
They begged you to forget.
"It's all over now; that has all passed".
"Forget," they said, "Forget!"

Forget the priceless lessons
That you had learned?
Erase experience from the black-board brain:
Forget Hunger

Resume

And its art of holding
Unswallowed crumbs in the mouth;
Forget Thirst
And its art of scumming saliva for days;
Forget Privation
And its art of sleeping in your own excrement;
Forget Exhaustion
And its art of walking for days without knowledge!

Forget these lessons
And you forget Faith,
That invincible force which,
In all probability, brought you safely home!

But you could not forget!
You could not erase!
These "things", gems of knowledge,
Cruel and precious, were etched in your brain
Engraved upon your "conscious".

So, tragic and inexplainable it was;
You had come home from the wars
And the wars had come home with you.
In spite of what lessons you had learned
About human nature,
You couldn't call the U.N.
A sword-swallowing seance
Because you desperately hoped it wouldn't be.

You had seen the weakness, lamentable weakness
Of man exemplified in disgusting
Exhibitions of selfishness;

And on the other hand,
You could remember instances
When the beauty of mankind
Was portrayed in inexpressible
Feats of altruism.
To many of you the world was a cell.
You were held fast, gripped, restrained from vindicating
The strangeness of your present self
By the conventions of a post-war world
Which was satisfied by the fact
That you had come home—
But which was ignorant of,
Or preferred to ignore, the fact
That some of you were returned piece-meal;
A world which refused to realize
That in some cases part of you was missing
Because such a realization would tend
To dramatics and might have
Long range consequences.

"Laugh and the world laughs with you,
Weep and you weep alone"—
This was their philosophy;
With which all must abide.

You were quite alone!

Out from the past
The memories oozed and the experiences gushed:
There in the forbidden-to-open box of your brain
Flashed the blinking knowledges:
A boy's shattered body laying rigid

In a pool of adulterated rain and blood,
His mouth open as if to speak
And his eyes vacantly fixed
On the floor of heaven.
Perhaps in the fraction of a moment
There appeared before you
The recollection of some Axis prison camp.
The macabre bodies, mangy heads
And hollow-cheeked faces
Of your acquaintances of only a year ago
Could again be seen
As they used to gaze
Through the thousand fanged fences
While they tried to remember
What freedom and food meant.

Perhaps just one of these thoughts,
Just one of these memories
Was the reason for your silence.
But you dared not speak!
You could not ask—for how could people answer?
The experience belonged to you.

* * * * * *

By now the country considers you
To be thoroughly rehabilitated.
You are found insignificant
Among the phases of civilian life.
And some of you find
That it was once easier for a sergeant
To establish a beach-head
Than it is today for a veteran
To gain a foothold.

The people who welcomed you home then
Are evicting you from those homes today.
Some of you are afraid to marry
Because you cannot find a home
And therefore your life is being deprived of love.
When you gripe and complain
The "powers that be" declare
That veterans only gripe
And have nothing constructive to offer.

Returned to a land wherein there exists
An acute housing shortage
You are baffled by proposals of the government
To absorb hundreds of thousands
Of Europe's homeless people.
After giving the youth of your life
To the purpose of demolishing Germany
For the sake of the national honor
And the preservation of democracy
You are now asked to contribute through taxes
Towards the re-construction
Of the ex-enemy.
At college, on the G.I. Bill,
Your history professors
Inform you of the futility
Of all your missions and encounters.

Your country throws charity to the ex-foe
While you remain the displaced personnel of America.

But you have grown up.
How old are you now?

Resume

Twenty two?—three?—four?
You went away as lambs
You did the feat of lions
And now, where ever you go
You can see that the law of the jungle,
The survival of the fittest,
Still governs a faction of the world.

And as you take your own child into your arms
You sense the familiar sensation of confused emotions—
I hate for mankind which might send
Your child into the Chaos
From whence you have returned,
And a passion to destroy anything
Which might deprive that child
The full joy of living.
Still, though the cost of living rises
And the commentators describe
The precarious status of the world;
Though the head-lines hint
Of international friction
In a world over which hover
Clouds of atomic calamity,
The old "die hard" Hope,
Bred of Faith,
That the bellicose days may be over
Still springs with its neutralizing comfort
And soothes your aching heart.

Infinitus

By George Hunter Cochran, '51

Where I have walked in darkened night alone
Upon a deep enmantled world of dream,
When light is humbled as a king unthroned,
Then there is that which is but does not seem.
The noise of silence shades the space of mind,
As wraiths invade the realm of careful man.
Then is Something, Substance undefined,
Whose touch is felt in each beloved command
To every subtle phase of restful life,
And lends to me some feeling unconfined
Of peace and kindly rest from mortal strife.
In that which was by holy Heav'n designed:
Who will from off the fatal wood descend,
The First and Last, Beginning and the End.

Looking Down the Years

By John Deasy, '48

"DADDY, what was radio like when you were a boy?" my youngest will ask some twenty years from now. "Well," I'll reply, "before television came in we had to depend a lot on our imaginations, but of course we didn't realize what we were missing. Let me tell you something about the good old days of radio."

Then I shall turn down the indirect lighting, gather the children together before the glass tile fireplace, and as we sit watching the even glowing synthetic logs try my hand at the age old art of story-telling.

Now to hold the attention of those three active youngsters I'll have to be good. They won't tolerate a dull recitation with the polite boredom of grown-ups. Therefore I'll make a direct appeal to their sympathies. Stretching my memory to its utmost bounds I shall go back to the time when I was very young. Then the romance of radio was fresh and the new found spirit of adventure strong. My youthful imagination was limitless and I could transcend the confines of time and space with ease. And the people of this wonderful world?. . .god-like in stature they strove in deeds which rivaled the Greek heroes of the dawn of literature. In rapt awe I witnessed the mighty feats and titanic struggles of stalwart "warriors" and valiant "blue-coats." These indeed were Homeric heroes, several years removed

from association with the Indians and cavalry of our "wild-west."

But those days passed quickly. The tone of adventure became more realistic. In boyhood my brothers and I followed the daily exploits of athletes, cowboys, aviators, pioneers, soldiers of fortune, detectives, and even interplantary adventurers. The procession was as endless at is was varied.

As youthful tastes developed and changed new programs were discovered. Sports began to take on a special importance and long autumn afternoons were steadfastly devoted to broadcasts from the nation's gridirons. Each play was mentally reconstructed, every substitute was committed to memory. Looking back now such concentration seems impossible.

Perhaps as I reminisce the most poignant memories will center around our battered old portable and the advantage of mobility which it brought to our household. No more was supper delayed in order to catch the latest ball scores or the head of the family forced to swelter in a hot livingroom out of loyalty to his favorite commentator. Best of all it was possible to enjoy fine music out on the front porch in the lingering warmth of a summer's evening. Then, if ever, radio listening approached perfection.

Then there will be a break, a part of the story which must be left untold. For, looking at those innocent children, I shall find it impossible to refer to that grotesque plague which descended upon the airways about the time I was in college. And so I won't tell them how the tension of war was supplanted by the excitement of artificial crime; and how the idol of the listening audience was the smart talking private "eye" and wine, women, and blackjacks the order of the

day; and how inevitably the crime was murder, for no other form of human misery would suffice. Nor shall I tell how in the course of a single evening the peacefulness of thousands of homes was invaded by such a bizarre pattern of blood and lust as the following.

At eight o'clock things started with a bang when someone's drugged husband was thrown in front of a speeding car. This was followed thirty minutes later by an actor shooting his line-stealing leading lady. When the dastardly culprit was hauled into court, the D.A. put a loaded revolver to his head and pulled the trigger. It was all in fun, however, since he was merely using a stage trick to prove a point. Still the massacre went on! At nine a hold-up man was stabbed three times and propped up against a doorbell. But in a way this was only fair because the murdered hood had been involved earlier in the sanguinary demise of a cafe owner.

By this time blood was flowing freely but the piece de resistance was yet to come. Promptly at nine thirty there was a fusillade of shots followed by the sickening groan of some poor wretch whom they bump off each week just to start the show. The story itself moved into high gear with the slugging and later killing of a Chicago gangster in his girl's apartment. Because said girlfriend was accused of the crime, a lawyer (the hero) became involved. This mouthpiece in turn was beaten and tortured. Now it seems that this whole caper began when a big time St. Louis gambler tried to move in on some smart Chicago operators. Just how bad a mistake this was soon became apparent. Finally a torpedo named Eddie was found in a closet with a butcher knife in his neck and the evening's slaughter was complete. Incidentally the gambler's wife was the murderess. She

wanted to frame her husband and get his dough. Being a sensuously beautiful young lady it was obvious that her only mistake was in getting caught.

But why go on? This tale is as endless as was its repercussions on the moral life of a nation. And if any shadow of it shall fall across my narrative I will brush it aside by relating how at first no local station carried night baseball games; and how we would draw up close to the loud-speaker and die a thousand deaths as the faint voice from Boston lifted us to the heights of joy or dropped us to the depths of despair with every play of our beloved Braves. Yes, those dear ones of mine will be secure from the grim shadow of glamorized evil but the seared imaginations of a generation of American children is a tragedy which can never be undone.

"Tears"

By Thomas Boning, '50

Once, in a distant land
I saw a boy seated
on a boulder,
Tears were in his eyes.
I asked—"Why do—"
"These are not tears"
he replied,
"—just dreams."

The Village Art Show

By Edward P. Fitz Simmons, '51

I

Art for sale. . .sidewalks done in oils, pastels.
If your room is Regency, I suggest this, it's softer.
Mountains of snow, churches on the Danube, French citadels
On Washington Square South.

II

"Step right up", the Muses barking,
Ya pays ya penny and ya takes ya pick.
Carnival of abstractions, cubeisms,
The air is catholic.
Mardi Gras
Country fair
The "hick" harking
The call of the Medici spirits, patrons of the arts.
Patrons of the arts,
On Washington Square South.

III

(I'll do one of you for half price, to draw a crowd.)
A little more to the left. . .
Your chin shows character, let me do a silhouette. . .

Have your sketch drawn, it takes but a few minutes, I guarantee a true likeness. . .
. . .Of course it isn't a true likeness, it's art, the artists conception, free art.
Art for the millions. . .
Reduced. . .
Art for many more millions,
Appeal to the pocketbook, before you appeal to the heart.

IV

My agent doesn't like me to exhibit here, but he hasn't sold anything at the twenty dollar gallery since last Thanksgiving.

V

When are you going to put the colour in, mister?
Gee, lady, what's an "abstract", and where's the lady in the abstract?
All I see is. . . . .
I don't know what I see.
. . .Better take it now, it may be gone when you return; the other day. . .
Wish they weren't using our lot, we could play ball.

Peculiar Company

By George Eagle, '50

YOU may, as I do, read the work of a novelist precisely because it is the work of that particular novelist. Regardless of what his new book is, even irrespective of its criticism by the press, you read it. What began as an enthusiasm has become something of a tradition, and to miss his current novel would be to trifle with that tradition. Also, you would suffer the suspicion that you had missed a legitimate delight.

It is because there are two such authors in my literary hierarchy that John P. Marquand and Bruce Marshall find themselves in juxtaposition in this essay. The association is otherwise improbable. Rather, it would have seemed improbable a few months ago, until during a leisurely summer holiday my mind embarked upon a consideration of the two writers, to determine whether there is, perhaps, a valid foundation for comparison—valid, that is, beyond the obvious premise that they are contemporary modern novelists.

But even if I can logically compare them, is there a reasonable motive for doing it? I have long heard myself assailing acquaintances with energetic, if rather inarticulate, recommendations of each of these authors. . .then to wonder if there were perhaps some inconsistency in recommending Marquand in one outburst and Marshall in the next; for a perfunctory perusal of their books will reveal them as conspicuously divergent in outlook, content, and, certainly, style. While these differences do not themselves render comparison

illogical, I feared that another divergency of deeper significance might, unfortunately, render inconsistent by equal recommendation of each. It was on that summer holiday that I decided that such a dual recommendation is, in fact, consistent, and this paper will reveal my motive for a bilateral criticism of Marquand and Marshall. Before describing the common characteristics of each, however, it is appropriate to deal with the profound divergency mentioned an instant ago. It lies, of course, between Marshall's devout Catholicity and the irreligious, materialistic atmosphere that saturates all of Marquand's work. Can a wider chasm exist between two men and can a sharper philosophical disparity separate two writers? I find it piquant to imagine that each is somehow embarrassed at finding himself in such peculiar company.

II

Bruce Marshall is British, but four of his novels have won, in different degrees, the attention of American readers. These four seem to me to belong in two categories.

Father Malachy's Miracle and *The World, the Flesh, and Father Smith* are gentle, poetic, sentimental portraits of gentle, poetic, sentimental priests. They are spankings administered to a naughty world, but in these two novels the reader is never distressed with a world which is unbearably naughty or with spankings that are too stinging. Rather, he is amused, and perhaps comforted, by Marshall's "deglamorization" of the world, and he is charmed by the rustle of cassocks audible on every page. Each of these novels is frankly religious, and each preaches Marshall's contention that humility and patience are somehow as important as twentieth-century technology.

Both Father Malachy and Father Smith are seen performing their chores of santification against a background of frigidly Protestant Scotland. The difference, which is really a superficial difference, is that Father Smith murmurs his Latin in the realm of reality while Father Malachy makes his enormous heavenly demands in the realm of fantasy. They both say substantially the same things. If Father Smith laments the stubbornness of Scotland in not acknowledging Christ's sacramental presence, Father Malachy laments with equal intensity that Scotland will not believe in God's whisking a dance hall from the heart of Edinburgh to perch it on a rock somewhere in the sea. The second, certainly, is no more a miracle than the first. The technical classification as fantasy of *Father Malachy's Miracle* is precisely that—a technical classification which does not render the theme of that novel less valid than the theme of the other. Marshall is saying approximately the same thing in two novels, but perhaps more whimsically in one than in the other; and the thesis of each is equally realistic.

The foregoing is not, however, an attempt to equate *Father Malachy's Miracle* with the more recent novel. In fact, I believe *The World, the Flesh, and Father Smith* to be superior, because it is richer in drama and more sensitive in humor. For instance, its satirization of the woman novelist and its sly attacks on twentieth-century vanities seem to me, in retrospect, more cogent than anything in *Father Malachy's Miracle*. This, however, is a decision based on taste and influenced, perhaps, by my resistance to fantasy. But this article will not dogmatize on the comparative values of these four Marshall novels; it will strive merely to suggest their tenor.

The other category is that occupied by *Yellow Tapers*

for Paris and this season's *Vespers in Vienna.* These, in contrast with the quiet, contemplative sentimentality of the other two, are more sharply critical of contemporary political practices and they deal more firmly with the tragedies which afflict society today. Perhaps they differ from the others because they portray the havoc of irreligion. In *Yellow Tapers for Paris,* the people who sit in the cafe while France topples are the people who have surrendered to the unchristian spirit of the modern world; in *Vespers in Vienna* we behold the physical and social ruin wrought ultimately by that same departure from the teachings of God. We might say, then, that *Father Malachy's Miracle* and its closely akin successor are essentially reflective, despite their reliance on incident and situation, and that *Yellow Tapers for Paris* and *Vespers in Vienna* are an application of Christian thought to a literary treatment of modern Europe's most urgent crises.

It is evident in all four of these novels that Marshall is a man of deep Catholic faith, of perspicacity, and of a rich, affectionate humor. And he is a man of intellectual variety. The acid commentaries on French life in *Yellow Tapers for Paris* and the exquisite penultimate paragraph of Father Smith were produced by the same mentality. The same mind accuses Edinburgh of being ugly as praises Paris for being beautiful.

One of the most fortunate characteristics of Marshall's style, I believe, is its masculinity. This seems particularly important in the presentation of a religious theme, because nothing is so likely to repulse the male reader as an effeminate representation of Christianity. I am convinced that Marshall is doing a service to Christianity by enunciating it in a virile manner in a century when there is among men such a widespread apathy to religion. We have been told that in the

Latin countries particularly the feeling has arisen that Catholicism is for women and children; it is significant if Marshall has suggested through his masculine literary technique that Christianity is also, indeed, for men.

Another feature of his style is lucidity. It is generally unimpassioned, calmly amusing, and notably urbane, and there are embodied in its passages of glittering originality. In the sphere of taste, I have heard Marshall accused of being vulgar, and I suppose there are in his books moments of rather trenchant frankness, especially in *Yellow Tapers for Paris.* But I do not think it is vulgarity simply as an affectation, or even, entirely, as a literary effect; I think there is moral substantiation for such frankness as appears in his work, because it dramatizes the very decadence which he is attacking.

His treatment of drama avoids melodrama by an habitual understatement of incident, an attempt to mute the more strident notes. For instance, the slattern's murder and Maria's suicide, occuring in different novels, are introduced in a manner entirely unspectacular. Physical action is brief and infrequent, while reflection and conversation receive the greater emphasis.

Marshall's diction and phrasing are simple almost to the extent of being rudimentary. This simplicity performs a definite literary task in the delineation of Father Malachy and Father Smith, both of whom are conceived as being humble and in a few respects naive. It is with equal finesse, however, that Marshall treats the so-called sophisticates, exposing their vanities until they are seen by the reader to be ludicrous.

His literary unorthodoxy is perhaps unique among modern noveltists. Descriptions of liturgy, detailed references to doctrine, and unabashed sermonizing on religion are things which are not normally encountered in novels

whose aim is commercial profit. Apparently his books have not had outstanding sales in this country, and I doubt that the percentage has been any higher in England. But I confidently suspect that the faith of many a Christian has been enriched by a reading of Marshall's novels. Is there, after all, a higher compensation?

III

Perhaps the quality which Marshall most conspicuously shares with John P. Marquand is sophistication. There is a clique on the west coast which rather expensively propagates its opinion that sophistication has to do with husky female voices and risque insinuations. In discussing sophistication this essay prefers not to be identified with that viewpoint, nor with any conception which supposes that sophistication is equated with cynicism or boredom or a discrimination between French and domestic champagnes. Instead, Marshall and Marquand can be considered in the valid sense sophisticated because each is a man whose observation and expression are astute, mature, and unexcited.

While Marshall observes life as it is manifested in Europe, Marquand deals principally with his contempories in New England and New York. While Marshall deals with people who expect one day to go to heaven or hell, Marquand writes of those who will merely go on drinking cocktails and collecting antiques.

I hope I have not implied that the Marquand novel is frivolous. So much is said of him as a satirist, and of his novels as "brilliant satires", that there is danger of suggesting to the unfamiliar that he is a writer of comedy. He is indeed a satirist, but not in the manner that Noel Coward, for instance, is a writer of comic satire. If there is such a literary

form as traditional satire, as typified by the output of people like Coward, it is a form to which Marquand does not contribute. Even *The Late George Apley* has a low content of mirth, and other novels, like the recent *B. F.'s Daughter,* come close to tragedy. The prevailing mood in Marquand's novels is, I believe, not one of glee but of something very near lament.

It seems important here to indicate the tenor of the Marquand novel. He writes primarily of fashionable people who enact their lives against a background of Beacon Street propriety and Park Avenue chic. They spend week-ends in Connecticut, pursue their lucrative careers in Manhattan, and dress for dinner in Washington. Sometimes they go to Europe and sometimes they even go to war, but they always come back hardly changed. Many of them are trivial, some of them are complicated, and a few of them are sensitive; but in general they are quite inert. When occasionally an energetic and purposeful character appears, he is pictured by Marquand as gauche and a trifle loutish. The perfect Marquand character does little, reflects much, converses urbanely, observes quietly and critically, and occasionally delivers those repetitious phrases so characteristic of the Marquand novel.

This is all right if you have a taste for it. The fact that I have that taste (or that craving) is part of the point of this essay, and a large part of its motive. For me, Marquand has never written an excessively long novel, nor a novel too static, but he has committed the opposite sin. *Repent in Haste* is too short and too contrived and too reliant on story—for my enjoyment; and yet to a reader I know it is the one really acceptable Marquand novel, and for precisely those reasons.

I admire the uneventfulness of Marquand's novels because it does not seem to me that we live our lives in plots. They are a fairly routine sequence of days, and when occasionally something dramatic or romantic occurs, it does not occur exactly according to the tradition of the novel. Marquand, I think, crystallizes this uneventfulness of living, and when his character on the last page resemble themselves as they appear on the first, it is because people in life so often have the same nasty habit of not changing.

Marquand's novels, though frequently satirical, are an investigation of the minds of his characters, who flounder in the persistent suspicion that something is awry in their lives. This tendency to reveal the thought patterns of his characters gives to the Marquand novel a contemplative air: Polly Fulton in *B. F.'s Daughter* is contemplating the disintegration of her marriage; H. M. Pulham, Esquire contemplates the inadequacies of his apparent success and the mediocrity of his family life; and Jeffrey Wilson in *So Little Time* contemplates the swiftness with which time is running short just before the recent war. Marquand shows a high degree of finesse in integrating these reflective passages with his dialogue and description, and in the fashioning of his prose it is to the appropriateness of his diction and the sureness of his cadence that the novels owe their charm.

I have often tried to find a word to express the mood which pervades most of Marquand's novels. Perhaps that word is *tiredness.* The people in these novels live in a condition of something like emotional fatigue tinged with apprehension. We see the central characters when they are middle-aged. They have outlived their years of hope and energy, and they have embarked on the time when each, because of some environmental or personal inadequacy, is beginning to

feel routine and futile. Marquand generally opens the novel at this point, allowing us retrospective glimpses of those days in which the promise lay.

His retrospective technique is interesting in itself. It is not orderly in the chronological sense; the sequences are scrambled and fitted together so that as facets they catch the light and reflect a maximum significance. This gives to the Marquand narrative a random air, but certainly not an appearance of being disjointed and incoherent. The memory, after all, is different from the eye, which sees things in a distance relationship. If the mind is engaged in a particular experience, the memory is likely to recall those things past which bear relationship to the present experience. But the mind does not retrace the entire history of one's life leading to that particular memory. Thus, in the Marquand novel the recollections are in the chronological sense disordered, occurring instead in a logical relationship to the main narrative.

Marquand is extremely adroit in bringing this off without confusion. This skill is especially useful in exposing the mental lives of his essentially reflective characters. When Henry Pulham is told to write a short autobiographical note for a class reunion, his mind for the next several days is cast back over the years since college in an inspection of what his life has really been. The pattern is superficially chaotic, but the final pages bring the entire novel into sudden and faintly tragic significance.

In glancing again at *Wickford Point* last summer, it occurred to me that this novel is perhaps the best introduction to Marquand. It provides a guide for so much of what Marquand is saying in other, and maybe better, works. In the latter part of the book there is a strikingly definitive pas-

sage which is almost a little essay; it is Jim Calder's recognition of what a publisher wants in a novel being written for large sales. Calder, a successful writer, realizes that his publisher, in order to sell Calder's novel, is demanding that the characters achieve in the final sequences what they have been wanting throughout the book. Calder's reflections on this dilemma between profit and art constitute a passage which illuminates not only *Wickford Point* but certainly *H. M. Pulham, Esquire* and *So Little Time* and perhaps the entire body of his major writings. And it is an excellent vehicle for that mood of tiredness that I attempted to describe a moment ago—not cynicism exactly, not boredom, but tiredness.

The person around whom the Marquand novel is usually built is indeed tired. He has looked at his life and has found in it slight meaning. He has looked at the lives about him and they are as shallow and pointless as his. He has looked at his early years, which promised so much, and at his present years, which yield so little. Unlike Marshall's characters, he does not even hope for the perfect life in eternity; instead, he searches for contentment in the dim, flickering light of godlessness.

Does this mean that Marquand's characters are less virtuous than Marshall's? Considering virtue on the natural plane, assuming momentarily that it can be divorced from theology, one suspects that Marquand's characters behave about as decently as most of Marshall's, and often with much better manners. But as implied, when they are being virtuous, their motives are humanitarian. Bob Tasmin, rejecting Polly Fulton's sex proposal in *B. F.'s Daughter,* does so not for love of God but for love of Polly or propriety. When Jim Calder suspects himself of moral inadequacy, there is no ques-

tion of betraying God but only of betraying himself. The Bostonians in *The Late George Apley* are respectable not because respectability will ingratiate them with God but because it will fortify them on Beacon Hill.

Besides being tired people, Marquand's characters are, understandably, unhappy people. Irreligion is apparently the reason, but the characters seem not to know it. Marquand seems not to know it. But he interprets this particular catastrophe with charm, subtlety, and sophistication.

IV

Marshall's characters are sometimes unhappy because they fail to enact their faith, but Marquand's characters are unhappy because they have no faith at all. The distinction, of course, is that, if both Marshall and Marquand are writers of worth, it is because each is efficient and talented—one in enunciating the truth, the other in reflecting the tragedy of its denial.

Of course, there is no reason to pretend that there is in Marquand's novels the same fundamental value that enhances the Marshall novel. Yet this paper cannot be written antithetically as a recommendation of Marshall and a peremptory rejection of Marquand, because for the Catholic reader they are not opposed in such a simple dichotomy. It is perhaps true that if Marquand merely pictures the darkness, Marshall tends to dispel it.

In performing such dissimilar tasks, they are, ironically, performing a service for the Catholic reader. For in Marshall's work we can feel something of that particular blessing that is ours in faith; and in the Marquand novel we are distressed by the instability, the tastelessness, the very tiredness of irreligion. It may indeed be sobering to peer occasionally into the dark.